

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTION 848-18(2):  
FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

**September 21, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my statement saluting the accomplishments of the Yellowknife Daycare Association, I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about daycare and child care.

In June the federal government announced it is putting \$7 billion into creating 40,000 new daycare spaces over the next 10 years. Can the Minister tell us how this money will be used in the Northwest Territories and when it will start flowing? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to congratulate the Yellowknife Daycare Association on their accomplishments and the work that they've done to provide service here in Yellowknife.

I want to update the Members here that the GNWT is currently still in negotiations with the federal government regarding the funding agreements on early learning and child care. Negotiations are ongoing and I look forward to seeing that report and sharing that report and outcomes with this House, and I am looking for feedback. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the answer from the Minister. Affordability and accessibility are the two big issues with child care in the Northwest Territories. I talked a little bit about how the Yellowknife Daycare Association will be addressing accessibility. I'm wondering what the government is doing to make child care more accessible in the communities that don't currently have it.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I'm proud to say that currently we have 23 communities across the Northwest Territories that offer early childhood programming. In the last little while we worked with some of our smallest communities to incorporate daycare programs, day home programs, and we're continuing to work with the other communities to get that up and running, and working with them on how we will do that.

We have made significant increases to the daily rates for early childhood program funding that came into effect October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2016. We do have start-up costs for people, groups, organizations that want to start up daycares, so there's a lot of work that we have done during this government on early childhood programming.

**MS. GREEN:** I acknowledge that the daily rates went up in October of last year, but the fact is that child care is very expensive. In fact, here in Yellowknife it's a working family's greatest expense after they pay for accommodation. As a result, really, licensed child care in a facility is only affordable for families with two good incomes. I'm wondering what work the Minister is doing on improving access to child care subsidies for lower

income working families.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** We continue to try to see what we can do in terms of providing subsidies for our infants to four-, five-, six-year-olds who go into early childhood programming. Junior kindergarten I think was a very good step in terms of providing early childhood programming for families in our communities right across the Northwest Territories. We continue to see how we can address the high cost of living. I think one big one was changes to the Canada Child Benefit as well as changes to the NWT Child Benefit; I think really made a big improvement in that area.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that it is useful to have junior kindergarten, and that is it is useful also to have an increased NWT Child Benefit, but that does not really address the cost of child care that families are paying for infants to age three, that is, prior to school age. I am wondering whether the Minister will investigate the feasibility of subsidizing the cost of child care on an income-tested basis, and set it up on a sliding scale like the NWT Child Benefit. Mahsi.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Over the course of this government and the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, a lot of work has gone into early childhood programming. This government made it a mandate and a priority during the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, and we continue to try to address high cost early childhood program needs. I will take that suggestion back to the department and see what we can work on and look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.